

Without Eating or Drinking

ל"ה

Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

Parshat Ekev

I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking, even bread and water. (Deuteronomy 9:9)

Rebbe Yaakov Shimshon of Kossov was once in exceptionally high spirits and kept his Hassidim enthralled with a colorful medley of Hassidic stories from the conclusion of the morning prayers until the middle of the afternoon. Not a single one of them even thought of going home for breakfast!

When his narration had come to an end, one of his Hassidim, reflecting on the experience, remarked, "There is nothing remarkable about the statement of Moses that he was on Mount Sinai **without eating or drinking, even bread and water**, for he experienced such intense pleasure during those forty days in the World Above, with everything that his eyes saw and with the Torah that he heard from the Eternal, G*dself, that he was satisfied, just as in the World to Come, in which, it is written, the righteous sit and bask in the radiance of the Divine Presence."

Rebbe Yaakov Shimshon understood the passage differently. "It could be," he said, "that these words do not express the satisfaction that Moses had at not eating and drinking, but rather express his regret. He considered how many divine sparks hidden in food and drink he could have liberated and elevated through eating and drinking with lofty intentions and that this food and drink would yet make a claim against him for having thus kept them from fulfilling their divinely appointed destinies."

Shabbat Shalom.

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